



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## AS WE BUILD NY'S NEW BUDGET, LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD: SENATOR RITCHIE'S WEEKLY COLUMN

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Just recently, the Governor unveiled his Executive Budget Proposal for a new state spending plan, marking the official start of the 2016-17 State Budget negotiation process. Now, my colleagues and I are digging into the Governor's proposals in an effort to see how we can build on the details of his plan to grow jobs, improve educational opportunities for our children, control taxes and spending and create new opportunities for people here in Central and Northern New York, as well as across the state.

As your representative, I'll be fighting to make sure the new state budget meets the needs of individuals and families in our region. One of the areas I will be most focused on is creating jobs and boosting our economy. As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I will be especially focused on improving efforts to strengthen family farms, which as we all know, are a major part of our local economy that have tremendous potential for further growth. Growing New York's agriculture industry will just be part of the work I'll be doing to increase the number of available, good-paying jobs and support our region's other key industries.

Once again, ensuring our public schools receive the resources they need to offer the best educational opportunities possible will also be of key importance this year. In the weeks to come, I'll be working not only to provide record aid for public schools, but also to ensure that we receive our fair share of education dollars from the state. Already this year, the Senate has voted in support of eliminating the GEA, a budget gimmick enacted before I took office that has put a strain on local schools. I am hopeful that this year, the Assembly will join with the Senate in supporting the end of the GEA, for good.

As my colleagues and I continue to review the Governor's proposal and work towards passing an on-time budget, I hope to hear what's important to you. Whether it's cutting taxes, increasing investments in education, supporting small businesses or any other priority, I hope you'll take the time to share your input through my website, [www.ritchie.nysenate.gov](http://www.ritchie.nysenate.gov). There, you can also find more information on the Governor's proposal and updates as my colleagues and I continue to move forward with the budget process. Your input is critical, and I hope to hear your thoughts on what we can do to improve New York State.